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And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.

John 20; 30 - 31

SEVEN FACETS OF THE BIBLE REVELATION NUMBER 195

A PICTURE OF THE UPWARD STRUGGLE OF THE SOUL

The Onward Reach
Flesh Against Spirit
The Cleavage
In the Master's Day

A Case in Point
The Great Specific
Some Applications
Affirmation

In my years of teaching, I have heard many controversies regarding the soul. I have heard many definitions of it, a variety of opinions. You, as a Spirit, have had an explanation of the soul given you in earlier lessons, but to refresh you, let us say again that YOUR SOUL IS YOUR CHARACTER, YOUR SOUL IS THE REAL YOU.

We can think of the soul as spirit also. The soul is the exact opposite of the flesh, and the lesson we must learn is to keep the soul uppermost and think of the flesh as secondary, and subjected to the spirit.

As I told you in a previous lesson, the body is important in the fact that it houses the soul, and for that reason the body should have the very best of care. You should eat foods that are simple and nourishing; you should keep your thoughts clean and elevated. This, in turn, makes for a healthy body, a healthy mind, which will be a joy to the soul.

I like Longfellow's definition of the soul, in which he says:

"The intellect of man sits visibly enthroned upon his forehead and in his eye; and the heart of man is written upon his countenance; but the soul often reveals itself in the voice, as God revealed himself to the Prophet of old in the still, small voice, and in the voice from the burning bush."

I am sure that there is not one among our membership rolls that has not, at some time or another, heard a still, small voice telling them what to do when they were at the crossroads of indecision. The still, small voice can always be depended upon for an answer, telling you right from wrong.

Going a little further with the same thought, someone has said, "The height of all philosophy is to know thyself, and the end of this knowledge is to know God. Know thyself that thou mayest know God and know God that thou mayest love Him and be like Him. In the one thou art initiated into wisdom and in the other perfected in it." Know thyself - all wisdom centers there.

There are so many truths explained in what is to follow in this lesson, that I shall not go further in an explanation of the subject matter, but rather get on with this study, starting with the following prayer, which prayer can be a great and abiding comfort:

PRAYER

Hold my hand, Heavenly Father, while I make my struggle from darkness to light, and make my life a part of the progress of mankind from the trammels of the flesh to the triumph of the spirit. Amen.

A PICTURE OF THE UPWARD STRUGGLE OF THE SOUL

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PART I - THE ONWARD REACH

FROM whatever viewpoint we consider it the story of life, like a drama or a story, is one of struggle. The forces of constructiveness are always pitted against those of destructiveness, the one to save and the other to ruin.

Take the health of the body for a physical example. The skin is always under attack by the countless and fast-multiplying germs of disease trying to get into the body through pores, breaks in the skin, food and water, breath, or any possible way, to set up infection. They are prevented by the health of the tissues, germicides, and avoidance of exposure.

If these organisms find a lodging-place, or get into the blood stream or the lymph channels, they may be carried anywhere. At any point of attack, however, they are met by protective agencies in the blood. A great battle takes place; millions of both germs and white blood cells perish, and the stronger side prevails. If enough allies in the form of treatment, vaccines, faith, prayer, or all of them enter the conflict, the health side is sure to win.

The same thing takes place in the larger field of collective or public health. There too health and disease are always fighting for the mastery, the one side or the other always winning. We apply whatever measures we can, and hope that some day the forces of health will win once for all.

We find the same kind of thing going on at all levels of life, both individually and collectively - poverty against plenty, ignorance against knowledge, crime against law, and wybelief against faith. These conflicts rage around us and in us till the issue is decided, and faith is confident that ultimately they will all be settled rightly, as phases of the new world life to which we look.

Why is life so ordered and the world so arranged that we have to have these negative forces to deal with at all? Why may we not have everything go right automatically while we fold our hands and sit back free of responsibility? We do not know entirely, but some reasons are apparent. That would deprive us of any part in the struggle, or of any strength and discipline the effort gives us, and of any share of credit for the victory. That would be out of keeping with our dignity and importance as the children of God, and would leave us unfitted for the management of the new world life when it comes.

We have not yet even listed the chief struggle going on all the time in the living of life. It is the upward reach of the soul pulling against the drag of the flesh, which is always trying to keep it from escaping from the earth level. This is another current running through life, and therefore through the pages of the Bible.

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Let us now turn to a fuller consideration of it ...

PART II - FLESH AGAINST SPIRIT

GOD is Spirit, and so is man; but in a world like this the spirit of man has to be housed in a tenement of flesh called the body. St. Paul says it is like a treasure kept in an earthen vessel.

St. Augustine prayed, "Thou hast made us for thyself, O God, and we can find no rest till we rest in thee." This life really consists of the search of the soul for rest with God, its companion Self, against the efforts of the flesh to hold it to the level, interests, and efforts of the material self. That was what Henri Bergsen meant in the already noted statement that evolution as the development of life to its ideal self is the process of the spirit struggling to free itself from the trammels of the flesh.

A surgeon who should have known better, once said in the presence of your Instructor, "You are always talking about faith, ideals, and what you call the things of the spirit, taking supremacy over the physical instincts and impulses and the interests of the body. That may be spiritual, but it is not biological."

That is just the point. It is not biological, nor is it meant to be. A lower animal is content to be biological. Honor, conscience, faith and the like never trouble it. But man is supposed to have advanced to a higher stage. If he is biological, he is also supposed to be biological plus.

The body is important, of course, because it is the vehicle of the soul. It is the mechanism through which the soul must express itself, carry out its purpose and perform its earthly mission. Its care and welfare are important - not as ends within themselves, but as means to the end of escaping the jungle, surpassing the ape and tiger, and substituting the upward look of aspiration and faith for bondage to the dust.

The divinely appointed destiny of man is not anything the flesh alone can reach, or would try to reach. The qualities and powers that will have to realize that destiny are not anything the flesh possesses. They are qualities of life, and the flesh is animated only by the presence in it of the life of the spirit. Like a motor car, it can go nowhere except as a living power at the wheel impels and directs it. If it is not under the power of a living person, it will refuse to go or go the wrong place, carrying its occupant with it.

Body and soul can be mutually hindering and frustrating, or they may be mutually harmonious and cooperative. In the later case, they can have the added power of God, and can do any good thing. The soul can surrender to the body and so be dominated by it, or it can use the body as a helper in carrying out its high purposes. It is determined by whether they come to terms, and on what basis.

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How the conflict between flesh and spirit comes out does not depend so much on either of them as it does on us. Without our intervention, it would turn out as it draws; however, either side with which we ally ourselves and to which we throw our strength will win. Remember, though, that the victory of the spirit is real and lasting, while that of the flesh is no victory at all.

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PART III - THE CLEAVAGE

THE cleavage between the domination of the flesh and that of the spirit appeared early in the life of our race. Jacob and Esau are good examples. Their relationship, even in early youth, shows Jacob interested in the longer view of things and Esau in the immediate satisfaction of physical desire. Esau was the kind of person who would surrender the most valuable asset he had for a savory meal, even saying that life was not worth living unless he could have it. Jacob, on the other hand, was the kind of person who even in his wilder days could not lie down to sleep on a pillow of stone without dreaming of heaven and angels.

The later life of each of these twins and their descendants was suggested by this early incident of the birthright and the mess of pottage. Even after both had changed for the better, this fundamental character difference appeared, and the tribes of their respective descendants bore the same traits. The descendants of Jacob became the Israelites who built a nation in Canaan, preserved the religion of Jehovah, and gave the world its Saviour.

In 686 B.C., when the Babylonian Army was at the gates of Jerusalem, the Capital of the land of Jacob's people, the Edomites, descendants of Esau, after all those centuries came out of the wild fastnesses of Idumea and helped the invaders conquer the City and take their own kinsmen captive. When Jesus, a descendant of Jacob, was in danger of His life in a great massacre of young children, it was Herod, a descendant of Esau, who ordered the slaughter, intending that in this manner the Holy One would be sure to be destroyed.

These two sections of humanity, the realists and the idealists, the sons of the flesh and the sons of the spirit, stand out in opposition to each other in every age, always contending for the mastery. It will be so till one of them dominates the world life. Which will it be? Jesus Himself gave the answer on the Mount - "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." John in his description of the New Jerusalem, already mentioned, indicates very clearly that this is exactly what will have happened. Only a spirit-controlled race could build such a world order, or would live in it.

One or the other of these two viewpoints has controlled the thinking and therefore the action of all the peoples of all the ages. We can trace them through the literatures of all lands and ages. We even find the children of the flesh trying to get footholds in religious thinking and work, fortunately still with minor success. Always we find these two viewpoints striving for supremacy in history, in the world life, and in ourselves.

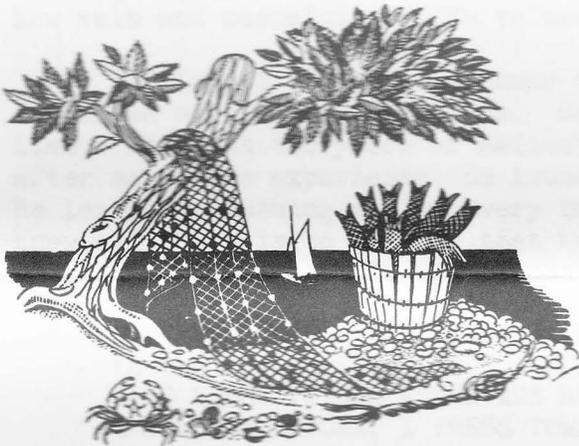
You can see that this is one of the larger fields of the work of the spirit of God in the newer phases of its effort to replace chaos with order. It is always striving to bring the day of the Lord nearer, and this is one of its ways. It is always striving to shape humanity to the pattern of its best, so at its best it will have the viewpoint of the spirit, not the domination of the physical, worldly, flashy, shallow, and deceitful side of life. The flesh will be the means and not the end, the servant and not the master.

PART IV - IN THE MASTER'S DAY

WE have already referred to the struggle between flesh and spirit even in the heart of Jesus the Man who was also the Christ the Son of God. It runs all the way from His boyhood, through the temptation and ministry to Gethsemane in the very shadow of the cross. Read again one or more of the four Gospels and notice how consistently in labor and in prayer He struggled to keep the flesh in subjection and the spirit supreme. We have to do the same.

The work of Jesus with His disciples was a saint-building enterprise, a task of making enough spirit-filled men to light the fires of faith so wisely and so brightly that their glow would spread around the world and through the centuries to the sure coming of the day of God.

It was along the Jordan and in Capernaum that He called His first disciples - Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Matthew. Peter, James, and John, all of them fishermen, must quickly have given special promise for they became His trusted inner circle with whom He counseled at important times and took with Him into the most important occasions and experiences. Like John, Matthew became one of the four biographers whose records of the great adventure have been preserved in the Scriptures. Most of the other eight were obscure men, but they were all more or less earnest and useful members of the group, even though one failed at the last. But at the first, not a man of them knew much about the life of the spirit.



But look at what happened during the next three years. The Teacher worked hard with His stumbling students, pointing out their mistakes, encouraging them in their progress, until they attained great spiritual stature. John, the young Son of Thunder, became the apostle of brotherly love. Peter, the impetuous fisherman, became the human beginning of the human church. Thomas was cured of his skepticism and became a wholehearted believer. Only poor Judas failed, because he simply could not forsake the material emphasis and acquire the spiritual one.

On the Day of Pentecost what do we find these men, under the leadership of Peter, doing? We find them helping to bring about, announce, and explain, the greatest of all manifestations of the Spirit, and demonstrations of what it can mean in human lives. Many of us consider that one of the two or three greatest events in human history, because it was the greatest victory of the spiritual viewpoint up to that time.

This has been growing ever since. Every revival of religion, every effort to express the love of God in gift or service, every time anyone sees the need for a greater spiritual emphasis in his life and makes it, every time a new and timid disciple starts on the great adventure, the human soul has taken another step forward, and triumph of the spirit over the flesh is brought a little nearer.

The Bible presents this panorama to show us where and how we can get into the

procession and help it move a little more rapidly and steadily toward the fulfillment of the Father's purpose and the Saviour's dream.

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PART V - A CASE IN POINT

WHAT happened to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road is familiar to every Bible reader. It happened quickly and his reversal of viewpoint and purpose was complete, though he was to spend the rest of his transformed life developing himself and working out the details.

The sadly mistaken life of Saul up to that day was what it was because, without realizing it, he was under the domination of the flesh. He was impelled by the hatred and prejudice which are products of glandular unbalance and wrong attitudes working together rather than those of spiritual impulses, and he lived to realize how vain and wasteful of life values it all was.

Turning to Christ he at once realized his true need and began to work on it. He talked with older Christians. He conferred with some of the experienced Apostles. He spent two years of meditation and prayer on the Arabian Desert. Then, after some home experience, he launched into a life of fruitful service in which he learned something new at every turn. But a time never came when he thought he knew all there is to know or that he had reached the summit. To the last he lived and learned, and he left the traces of it throughout his writings.

- * "NOT AS THOUGH I HAD ALREADY ATTAINED, EITHER WERE ALREADY PERFECT", he wrote to the Philippians, "BUT I FOLLOW AFTER . . . THIS ONE THING I DO, FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND, AND REACHING FORTH UNTO THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEFORE, I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK . . ." You see, he was starving out the demands of the flesh by emphasizing the needs of the spirit, and he was going forward, as good runners do, by keeping his eye on the goal.
- * "FOR THEY THAT ARE AFTER THE FLESH DO MIND THE THINGS OF THE FLESH", he wrote to the Romans, "BUT THEY THAT ARE AFTER THE SPIRIT THE THINGS OF THE SPIRIT. FOR THE MIND OF THE FLESH (Revised Version) IS DEATH; BUT THE MIND OF THE SPIRIT IS LIFE AND PEACE."
- * Again to the Romans he wrote, "AND IF CHRIST BE IN YOU, THE BODY IS DEAD BECAUSE OF SIN; BUT THE SPIRIT IS LIFE BECAUSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS."
- * To the Corinthians he wrote, "KNOW YE NOT THAT YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST (Spirit) WHICH IS IN YOU ...? YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE; THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY, AND IN YOUR SPIRIT, WHICH ARE GOD'S."
- * Again to the Corinthians he wrote, summing up this inward conflict, "I KEEP UNDER MY BODY, AND BRING IT INTO SUBJECTION: LEST THAT BY ANY MEANS, WHEN I HAVE PREACHED TO OTHERS, I MYSELF SHOULD BE A CASTAWAY."

All these writings show that the great Apostle had finally accomplished the vital adjustment. He had the flesh with its desires and abilities where they belong, where they could be of importance and value instead of being a hindrance and

menace, namely in subjection to the spirit. On that day he could say that the miracle of the Damascus Road was completed. One is not really whole, or holy, until his body and spirit are fully adjusted to each other, the spirit in control, and the body in subjection.

So the triumph of the spirit has to be accomplished from sector to sector, life to life, and age to age. As long as that keeps happening we are on the way, especially those within whom it happens.

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PART VI - THE GREAT SPECIFIC

SPIRITUALLY speaking, evil is a disease and good is health. In the Twelfth Chapter of Romans, St. Paul gives us one sure specific for the prevention and cure of the disease and the establishment of soundness and health. The principle of his prescription is one commonly applied in medical practice. It is simple, plain, free of cost, and you do not have to go to a drugstore to get it filled or to a physician to have it applied. Here it is - "Overcome evil with good". You may or may not like the taste of the first few doses; but you will like it better every time you take it, and the time will come when it will be one of your chief delights. The important thing is to begin. The sooner you do, the sooner you will establish and maintain good resistance.

That is all there is to it. Just forget about the evil as though it did not exist and center your whole attention on the good. When a receptacle is already full of something desirable it can receive nothing undesirable, that is, unless some of the desirable is emptied out. Your life is a receptacle, and the good can crowd the evil out, or it can be allowed to work the other way.

If a low-minded guest comes into a company of refined and wholesome-minded people, he does not remain long. If a mist hides a beautiful landscape and the sun rises the mist soon departs. If disease germs attack a healthy and well-fortified body, they give up because the tissues are not receptive. The secret of physical health is to keep every tissue at its best. The secret of spiritual health is to keep the heart and mind resistant.

Many people keep their inner lives toned up by providing them with good nourishment both at work and rest - good books, good thoughts, good associations, good and beautiful things to see and hear. It has been found that planting good thoughts in the mind before or even during sleep is productive, because they grow and activate even during unconscious hours.

Some wise people have been doing that for years, having found that it is one way to overcome evil with good. In fact there are some references to the practice in the Bible. How else are we to interpret these words of David, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness"? Sleep is a good time for good to put evil to flight.

St. Paul did not neglect the process either, but naturally he would apply it actively. He was simply too busy doing good even to think of anything unworthy

except to help others also to overcome it.

This, then, is the great secret. The spirit has in it the power of victory, while the flesh has in it the making of defeat, when either is allowed to dominate the other. How strange that any life should ever go to ruin, or even be less than its best, when the remedy is so simple and so available!

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PART VII - SOME APPLICATIONS

THERE are several odds and ends of this subject to which we should at least give some brief attention in order to round out some things we have already said, so the reader may follow them further if desired.

No extreme disregard of the importance of the physical has been intended. The flesh and its needs are as important and normal in their place as they are pernicious and treacherous out of their place. The body, as the temple of the Holy Spirit, is good, or it would not have been created; but if one gets to treating the temple as more important than the Spirit it houses, it promptly becomes a hindrance and a harm.

We recognize any conflict between the flesh and the spirit only because the flesh sometimes gets out of hand and challenges the spirit for the place of mastery. This is a threat to integrity and destiny, a rebellion that must be suppressed. As a servant the flesh is good. As a master it is ruinous.

These inner uprisings of the flesh need not be hard to recognize or difficult to put down. When one feels himself caught between conscience and expediency, or resolution and compromise, or integrity and conformity, or steadiness and irresponsibility, or principle and appetite, or reverence and vainglory - and any of these conflicts has many forms - he has an emergency on his hands and needs to take prompt and vigorous measures to see that the flesh remains in subjection and the spirit in command.

Remember that the soul requires nourishment and care just as the body does, and as regularly and plentifully. How we pamper the body's demand for food and indulgence! How often and richly we feed it, and to what trouble and expense we go to see that its food is served with every possible appeal!

The soul requires a different kind of food, one less expensive but no less abundant. On these very accounts it is easier to forget and neglect. It requires prayer, meditation, inspiring reading, worthy friends and companions, elevating conversation, and the effect on itself of good deeds. The soul can no more live on un nourishing food, or irregular feeding, or what it had last week, than the body can. You can estimate one's character by knowing his life, his family, his home, his companions, and his books, for they are some of the leading sources from which his soul is fed.

Along such lines as these the spirit of God that brooded over chaos has more and more been winning its way since time began. It is now nearer the day of the

supremacy and control of God than ever before. Its further progress depends partly on us. Each decides how valiant and faithful his soul shall be in winning against the shallow, unimportant, and deceptive world of things.

The biological side of life need not be worried about. It requires no urging or promotion. It will take care of itself. For instance, we do not have to plead or argue with a hungry man to induce him to eat. The spirit is easier to neglect because it is unseen and calls to us with a still, small voice instead of overpowering us with insistent urges and desires. It is the spirit that needs the special attention and faithful care.

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AFFIRMATION

The Spirit of God marches up the ages winning the supremacy of the soul in the making of the new world life, and I march with it.